The Church

June 25 33

The Biggest Business in the World.

Mtt. 16:18 I will build my church.

INTRO. Purposefully, I avoid the entire verse. These words spoken in an obscure corner of the then-known world, by one who was then known as a Galalean teacher-prophet identified witha a despised race. He had a mere handful of disciples and altho the common people heard him gladly, both the political powers of Roma and and theecclesiastical leaders of the Jews were opposed to him.

An acorn is an insignificant mite when compared with a full grown oak tree; yet the majestic oak tree is the outgrowth of the creative purpose of God in the acorn. "I will build my church"- to what an oak has this small acorn of five words grown to be! It strikes its roots deep into the heart of humanity across the centuries, its branches spread over every continent and island, its fruits nourish millions of people in every clime and tongue.

I. Someone has declared that the Church of Jesus Christ has become the biggest business in the world. Not even theU.S. or the oil industry is any bigger. The CH. of Ch. has more than 500 million members; its cathedrals, chapels and churces are scattered over the hills and thru the valleys of every country where the sun shines: its employees, as ministers, priests, missionaries, teachers, doctors, nurses and industrial leaders comprise an army of over a million: its publication of bibles, papers and periodicals consume tons and tons of paper every year: its institutions are as wide and vried as human need- to enlighten and heal and lift mankind. Whenever and wherever the Church has been true to Christ it has been the greatest of all institutions.

II. Wisdom may exist without the school; truth may survive without books; justice may continue without courts- but who is so foolish as to advocate that we ignore or cease our loyalty to these institutions? Christianity might survive for a generation or two without the church, but it is evident to a thinking person that if the type of personal life which Jesus taught and lived is to become effective in human life, and if the brotherhood which he taught and lived is to becomethe practice of nations and ra races, we must maintain a strong church worthy to embody and promote that spirit. Will manufactures flourish without factories? Will financial exchange and credit exist without banks? Will education thrive without insiiiutions of learning? What then of religion- has the church a claim on our loyalty, or may we ignore or slight it without great loss? A spirit without a body we call a ghost, a body without a spirit we call a corpse. Neither is acceptable to us. A healthy spirit in a healthy body is what we want. Christ has furnished the spirit, the Church is the body. Unite the two, that means power and victory.

III. Think of the stress and straim of our modern life which drains every ounce of reserve and drives multitudes to seek destruction instead of tapping the resources of God and gaining peace, poise and power. Think of the husks of cheap amusement offered to to that restless throng in most theatres and in the newspapers-sheets of glorifid gossip! Think of the artificial life many are living- apartment house dwellers with no stimulating friendships, no social community obligations, no burden to bear with strength and pride, no self-sacrifices to chasten and ennoble. Such living cheapens life

In such a world as ours is there no need for the Church of Christ? To ask the question is to answer it.

IV. The Church deserves our loyalty not only because it organizes religion and makes it effective, but because it energises men and women, young and old, for finer and nobler living.

1. The Church calls people together for common worship and in that worship they attain together what none could attain alone.

Many individual masters thrill us with their single instruments and individual voices, but it is the band and orchestra and chorus that carry us to heights that no single instrument or voice can reach.

A single star may have brilliancy, but it is the constellations of stars that light the heavens with a brightness no lone star possesses.

A single flower may be beautiful but it remains for the fields and beds of myriads of many colored flowers that give to nature its rich and fascinating charm. The life of an individual true Christian is beautiful and inspiring, but Christians united together in common worship, when their worship rings true, lifts the soul nearest to a realization of the presence and goodness of God.

2. The Church calls people toa common service for others-preaching, teaching, healing. Revolutionary changes may sweep the fields of political government, the fields of industry and commerce and the laboratories of science, but so long as man is man- with a sense of eternity planted in his soul, aware of divinity everywhere, and cherishing a hope (heaven's light- the preaching, teaching and healing must go on.

IV. 3. The Church does not aim to raise a man's wages or increase his income, but it does purpose to give him such a sense of values that he will be able to use what he has to enrich his own life and the lives of others. The churches business is not to teach science or mechanics, but it is the church's business to teach the fine art of building character.

Every pin has its point — every appreciation

In conclusion, a word of warning and encouragement. The effectiveness of the Church depends upon its membership. To the degree that its members are faithful and true and loyal to their God, their Christ, their fellow men and to themselves, to that extent will the power of God ~~in and thru His Church~~ can be made manifest. in & thru His Church

(of this church

Our consideration, to-day, of the anniversary not only calls us to celebrate with joy and happy pride, but call each and every one of us to an humble and sincere rededication of ourselves to God and to His eternal will for us as individuals as well as to us as a church collectively.

Everything that is false and untrue about us churchmembers darkens the light of God in its influence. If we would add to the glory of the Church of Christ we ourselves must be shing lights. To embody, to interpret, and tp present the life and ministry of Christ to mankind is the business of the Church which calls for your loyalty and mine. That is the biggest business in all the world.